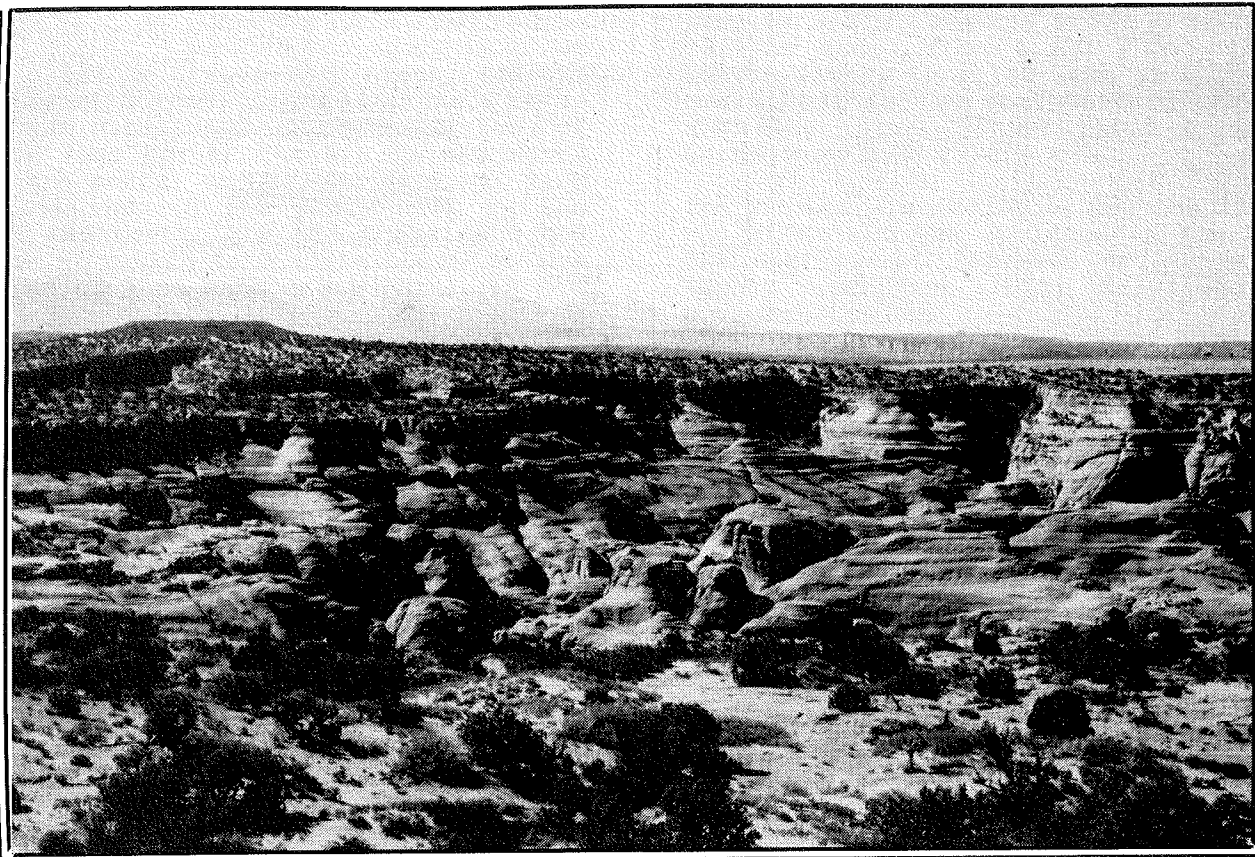
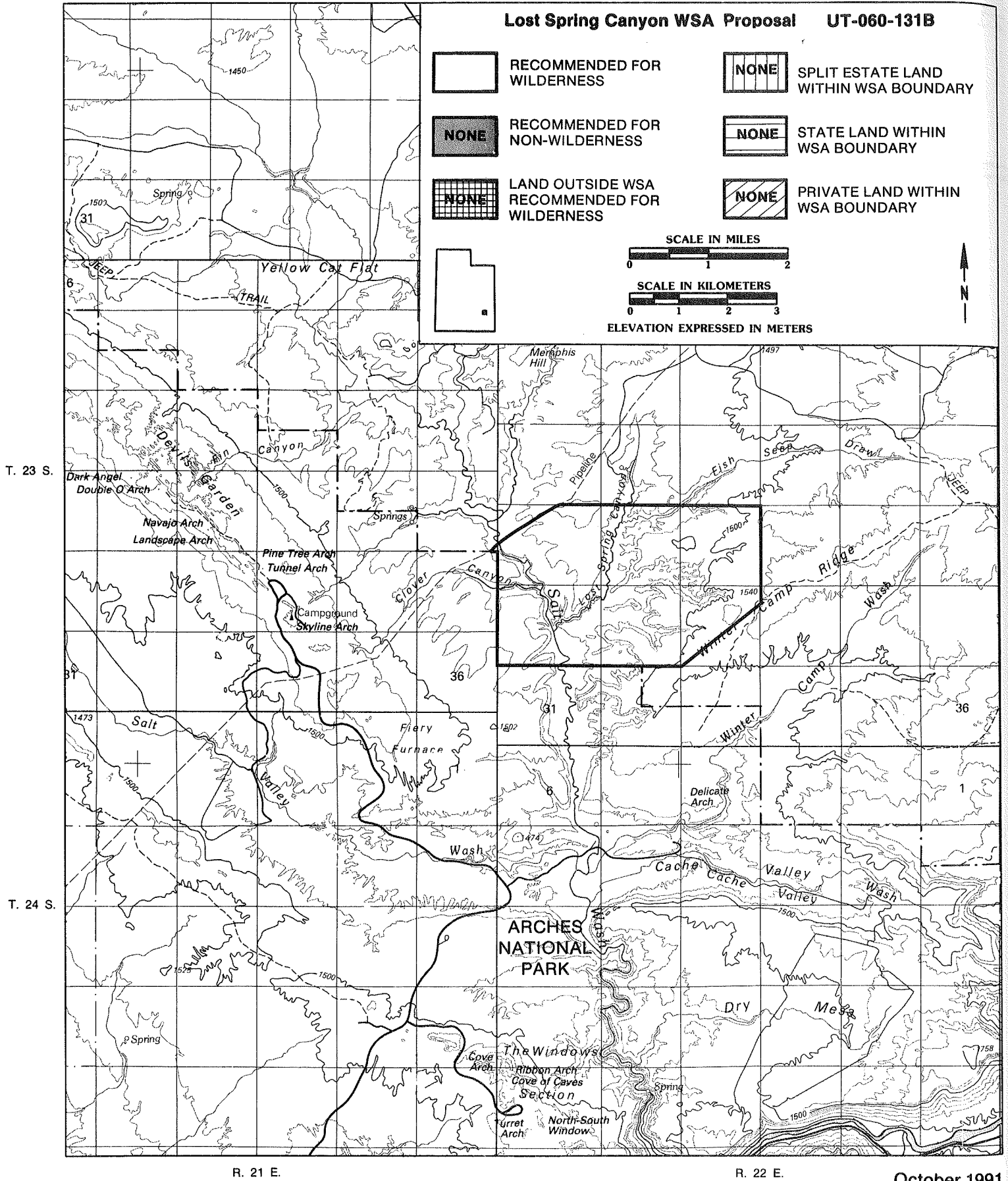


Lost Spring Canyon WSA



LOST SPRING CANYON WSA



LOST SPRING CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA: 3,880 acres

The Lost Spring Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (UT-060-131B) is in south-central Grand County, about 10 miles north of Moab, Utah (population 5,333). The WSA extends about 2 miles from north to south and 3.5 miles from east to west. The boundaries of the WSA are along section lines except at the southeast corner, where the boundary is along the crest of Winter Camp Ridge, and the northwest corner, which is along a natural gas pipeline (see Map). Sections of State land border the WSA on the north and the south, and Arches National Park is adjacent to the study area on the west and south. The WSA contains 3,880 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

There are no private, State, or split-estate land in-holdings in the WSA (see Table 1).

The unit consists of portions of two canyons and short tributaries, bounded by 300 to 400 foot cliffs, and open, sparsely vegetated flats in the northwestern portion of the WSA. No perennial streams are within the study area. Elevations range from 4,400 feet on the canyon floors to 5,142 feet on top of a small mesa in the southeastern part of the study area. Desert shrub predominates over most of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the FLPMA and was included in the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) finalized in November 1990.

**TABLE 1
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA**

WITHIN THE WSA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	3,880
Split-Estate (BLM surface only)	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0
Total	3,880
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the WSA)	3,880
BLM (outside the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (within the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the WSA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	3,880
In-holdings (State, private)	0
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	0
Split-Estate	0
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0

Source: BLM File Data

LOST SPRING CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation in this report, and a no wilderness (no action) alternative.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE:

3,880 acres

(recommended for wilderness)

0 acres

(not recommended for wilderness)

The recommendation in this report to designate the entire WSA as wilderness. This is the environmentally preferable alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term.

All of the WSA is in a natural condition. About 75 percent of the area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

The area contains colorful eroded sandstone formations including natural arches, fins, and domes similar to those in the adjacent Arches National Park.

Potash, oil, and gas resources may exist in the WSA. The potential for potash extraction is low. If the WSA is managed in conjunction with the proposed wilderness in the adjacent Arches National Park, wilderness values would outweigh the values of the mineral potential of this WSA.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

Naturalness is defined as an attribute in which the evidence of man is substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor and where minor imprints of man exhibit no cumulative impact that is substantially noticeable. The area is generally free of human imprints and meets the naturalness criteria for wilderness. The scenic sandstone formations have been unaltered by man. Several seismograph lines were laid on the mesa top in the northern portion of the WSA and there are two ways totaling a 0.25 mile, a 0.25 mile of pinyon pine fence, ORV tracks in wash bottoms, and cattle

paths. All are substantially unnoticeable in the area as a whole.

B. Solitude

The WSA has outstanding opportunities for solitude on 2,910 acres (75 percent of the WSA). It does not meet the criterion for outstanding opportunities on the remaining 970 acres.

Terrain is the most important influence on opportunities for solitude. Numerous side drainages to Lost Spring Canyon and Salt Wash have highly eroded relief and block out the sights and sounds of nearby users. Opportunities for solitude within these drainages are outstanding. Solitude found in the main canyons and mesa flatlands is of lesser quality.

Most vegetation within the WSA is low-growing and does not contribute to a feeling of solitude. Some vegetation screening does exist at the higher elevations and in some wash bottoms due to riparian vegetation.

The WSA is affected somewhat by outside influences. At times vehicle traffic within Arches National Park can be heard in the unit. Maintenance activities along the natural gas pipeline, which borders the unit on the north, occasionally are noticeable from within the WSA.

Opportunities for seclusion are many and varied, particularly within the many erosional features and side drainages of Lost Spring Canyon. Opportunities are present to a lesser degree within Salt Wash. Opportunities are generally less than outstanding on the flat mesa tops.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Approximately 2,910 acres (75 percent) of the WSA have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The WSA provides opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, and photography. A diversity of routes can be taken wholly within the WSA and in combination with trips that also include entering the Park. Scenic values contribute greatly to these opportunities. There are also opportunities for rock climbing.

LOST SPRING CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

D. Special Features

The most outstanding special feature of this unit is its erosional and geologic diversity. Colorful rock formations, including several natural arches, as well as fins and domes, provide excellent scenery. Some cultural resource values are also present. The entire WSA is rated as outstanding for scenic quality.

Cougar, a wildlife species associated with wilderness, may occasionally visit the WSA. Peregrine falcons and black-footed ferrets, listed as endangered species, may inhabit or frequent the WSA. Four other animal species and five plant species that are considered sensitive may occur within the WSA. Refer to Appendix 4 and the Affected Environment, Vegetation and Wildlife Including Special Status Species sections of the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Final EIS for additional information.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

A. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a potential natural vegetation (PNV) ecosystem not presently represented in the NWPS. PNV is the vegetative type that would eventually become climax vegetation if not altered by human interference, and is not necessarily the vegetation that is currently present in an area.

The WSA is in the Colorado Plateau Province/Ecoregion. The PNV in the WSA is entirely juniper-pinyon woodland 3,880 (acres). The PNV in the WSA is represented in the NWPS nationally and in Utah and in other BLM study areas both in and outside of Utah. This information is summarized in Table 2 from data compiled in December 1989.

TABLE 2
ECOSYSTEM REPRESENTATION

BAILEY-KUCHLER CLASSIFICATION (PNV)	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
NATIONWIDE (COLORADO PLATEAU PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	10	1,393,642	84	2,140,125
UTAH (COLORADO PLATEAU PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	26,000	53	1,702,318

Source: BLM File Data.

B. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Days Driving Time (5 Hours) of Major Population Centers

The WSA is within a 5-hour drive of the Provo-Orem, Utah and the Salt Lake City-Ogden, Utah areas. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated wilderness and other BLM study areas within a 5-hour drive of these population centers.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Lost Spring Canyon WSA would not contribute significantly to balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas within the NWPS. As of January 1987, the NWPS included 44 areas comprising 3,443,330 acres in Utah and Colorado, the adjacent state nearest the WSA.

LOST SPRING CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

TABLE 3
WILDERNESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

POPULATION CENTERS	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
Salt Lake City-Ogden, Utah	11	1,099,962	78	2,725,438
Provo-Orem, Utah	11	721,793	90	2,784,328

Source: BLM File Data

A Lost Spring Canyon Wilderness would supplement the NWPS in the Canyonlands Section of the Colorado Plateau, however, where there are just two established wilderness areas, totaling 70,751 acres. There are two designated wilderness areas within 100 miles of the WSA. To the south of the WSA is the 45,000-acre Dark Canyon Wilderness (U.S. Forest Service [FS]), and to the south-east, in Colorado, is the 11,180-acre Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness (National Park Service [NPS]).

Manageability (The area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.)

There are no State or private lands in the WSA. No mineral exploration or development is projected. Continued livestock grazing would be compatible with wilderness designation.

Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM) prepared a mineral assessment report for the Lost Spring Canyon WSA (USGS Bulletin 1754-C, Sandra J. Soulliere, et al., 1988). The report indicates that the potential for undiscovered oil and gas resources, potash, and halite (rock salt) is moderate. The resource potential for undiscovered geothermal energy and undiscovered metals and nonmetals is low. Large volumes of inferred subeconomic resources of sandstone, sand, and gravel are present within the study area. Common-variety sandstone is exposed over most of the WSA, and sand and gravel are found in two drainages. The isolation of the WSA and the abundance of similar materials in deposits outside the study area make

development of deposits that occur within the WSA seem unlikely.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table (Table 4) summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the area as wilderness.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered to be significant issues in the EIS.

Summary of WSA-Specific Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Comments received during the early stages of the EIS preparation were used to develop significant study issues and alternatives for the ultimate management of the WSA.

During formal public review of the Draft EIS, a total of 42 inputs specifically addressing this WSA were received from 40 commenters, including oral statements received at 17 public hearings on the EIS. Each letter or oral testimony was considered to be one input. Duplicate letters or oral statements by the same commenter were not counted as additional inputs or signatures. Each individual was credited with one signature or testimony regardless of the number of inputs. In general, 30 commenters supported wilderness designation for part or all of the WSA, while 3 commenters were opposed. Seven commenters addressed the relative merits of the EIS but took no formal position on wilderness designation.

LOST SPRING CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Those favoring wilderness commented that wilderness designation would complement proposed wilderness in the adjacent Arches National Park. The majority of those commenting in favor of wilderness were from other states.

Those opposing wilderness were concerned that wilderness is not compatible with multiple use and designation would prohibit mineral exploration and development. Two of the three commenters opposed to designation of the WSA were from rural Utah and the third was from another state.

One Federal agency, the National Park Service, commented on the Draft EIS for this WSA. The NPS stated that the WSA has potential as an addition to Arches National Park.

No comment letters were received on the Final EIS.

There are no State sections in the WSA. In commenting on the Draft EIS, the State of Utah expressed general opposition to wilderness designation, but did not take a definite position regarding wilderness designation of the WSA. The State commented that the wilderness values are low to moderate compared to other WSAs in the region, that the all wilderness alternative would complement the values found in the adjacent Arches National Park, and that there is a potential conflict with oil, gas, and potash resources. Specific State comments on the Draft EIS dealt with the identification of adjacent State land, clarification of the boundary of Arches National Park, and the possibility of desert bighorn sheep migrating from Arches National Park into the WSA.

The Lost Spring Canyon WSA is in Grand County. The Grand County Master Plan does not specifically address the WSA. The plan generally emphasizes continuation of present uses and maximizing mineral development. The Grand County Commission is opposed to wilderness designation and has endorsed the Consolidated Local Government Response to Wilderness that opposes wilderness designation of BLM lands in Utah. In commenting on the Draft EIS, the Commission stated that Lost Spring Canyon cannot be effectively managed as wilderness be-

cause of adjacent State lands, mineral, oil and gas potentials and visible and audible activities on adjacent lands. The Commission also noted that designation of the area as wilderness would be contrary to the County's overall planning goals, and would not be cost effective because only a small part of the WSA would be disturbed if the area is not designated wilderness.

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Table 4
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative

Alternatives		No Action/No Wilderness
Issue Topic	Recommendation All Wilderness (3,880 Acres)	
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Wilderness designation would preserve the WSA's wilderness values including naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and special features including Class A scenery, archaeological sites, endangered and sensitive species, and wildlife associated with wilderness. This alternative would enhance and complement wilderness values, uses and management of the contiguous NPS lands, which are proposed for wilderness designation by NPS.	Wilderness values would not be protected by wilderness designation and loss would occur as intrusions increase. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be directly lost on 40 acres and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be indirectly reduced in quality throughout the WSA. Because of oil and gas exploration, vehicular use of ways, washes, and future energy-exploration roads would also detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation throughout the WSA. Some special features including endangered and sensitive species and wildlife associated with wilderness would not be significantly affected. Special features that would be disturbed include Class A scenery and cultural values. This alternative would not enhance and complement wilderness values, uses and management of the contiguous NPS lands, which are proposed for wilderness designation by NPS.
Impacts on Mineral and Energy Exploration and Production	The opportunity for leasable and locatable minerals exploration would be foregone. However, the loss of development potential would not be significant because there is only low certainty that economically recoverable minerals are in the WSA and the probability of development is low even if the WSA is not designated wilderness.	Oil and gas or other mineral exploration of development would not be affected because mineral leasing, location of mining claims and development would not be restricted for protection of wilderness values.